

MEDIA RELEASE

7 June 2019

2019 Crushing Season to commence

As announced by the Sugar Industry Tribunal, the commencement of the 2019 Crushing Season at Labasa was deferred to allow a bit of a breathing space for the industry as a whole to fully prepare for the crush this season.

Having been updated on the status of the 2019 harvest and mill preparations, the Sugar Industry Tribunal has confirmed and approved the following dates for the commencement of crushing for each of the mills:

Labasa Mill – 12th June 2019

Lautoka Mill – 13th June 2019 (no change from the originally set date)

Rarawai Mill – 9th July 2019



Left: General Manager Lautoka Mill, Leela Ramesh, standing next to the mill's new Motor Control Centre

Labasa Mill which was supposed to have commenced its 2019 crushing season on 6th June, will now start on 12th June, 2019. Memorandum of Gang Agreement are being received in the North, as growers secure harvesting gangs. The Labasa Mill has completed trials and testing of its turbines and all other milling equipment, and the mill is ready to commence crushing.

“We operate in an industry where stakeholders are dependent on each other. Hence, the decision to defer the start for Labasa allowed more time for our growers to finalise their harvesting requirements”, said CEO Graham Clark

Fiji’s biggest sugar factory, Lautoka Mill will start crushing as scheduled on 13th June 2019. The mill has concluded its pre-crushing trials and is deemed fit and ready to start.

Growers continue to ready their harvesting efforts, including securing harvesting gangs and the booking of mechanical harvesters. Arrangements are in place for the transfer of cane to Lautoka, from the Rarawai Mill area (including Rakiraki) to assist farmers in that mill area to also start harvesting.

“We will continue to work with all stakeholders to ensure a smooth start to the 2019 season”, said Clark



Above: Lautoka Mill Chief Engineer, Naivote Seru (left) and engineer Charles Khan standing next to the mill’s 5-mega-watt turbine

Rarawai Mill which is undergoing a major refurbishment this off-season, will commence its crushing for the 2019 season on 9th July, allowing the appointed contractors to complete their work fully. The contracted engineering company is working 24 hours a day, 7 days per week to ensure that refurbishment of the boiler is completed before testing, scheduled for 3rd July 2019.

“Rarawai is scheduled for live steam trials for the new boiler on 3rd July. To achieve this, all upgrades to the boiler and auxiliary equipment will be completed by end of this month”, said Clark.

FSC's mechanical harvesters are also in the process of being rostered for distribution throughout the cane belt, ready for the 2019 crushing season, and the first seventeen of its new 6-wheeler trucks have been dispatched to Labasa to commence work.

FSC calls for all cane transport operators to prepare and register as necessary for the 2019 cane haulage season, noting that further announcements will be made to fully explain the role of the LTA in road safety, surveillance and enforcement of load regulations to apply for the 2019 cane crushing season.

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